upon except their buddies and themselves.

Minimum GT Score and Technical Proficiency. To succeed during the course's performance oriented testing, students must be able to grasp the technical data quickly and must rely heavily on their land navigation, mission planning, communications, camouflage, and movement skills. The minimum GT score of 110, along with a proficiency in all Skill Level 2 tasks, will help ensure successful completion of the course.

Motivation. The Sniper School is considered one of the most physically and mentally demanding courses the Army has to offer. In addition to having to learn ballistics, ammunition types and capabilities, adjustment of optical instruments, and range estimation procedures, snipers must also display initiative, decisiveness, self-reliance, good judgment, and common sense. Accordingly, sniper candidates must be selected from personnel who are highly motivated and have a positive attitude.

Retainability. A commander may decide to reward a soldier's good performance with an opportunity to attend the sniper course, but if the soldier does not have at least a year of retainability, this training will not benefit either the unit or the Army.

A commander can simplify his selection process by creating a sniper indoctrination program similar to a pre-Ranger training program. If that program is made a part of the sniper sustainment program as spelled out in TC 23-14, competition for a slot will then give the unit better qualified potential snipers.

The soldiers selected to attend the indoctrination program should meet, at the least, the prerequisites as outlined in DA Pamphlet 351-4. Then, the training they receive in the indoctrination program should be both mentally and physically demanding, and should include the following:

- Zeroing and practice fire.
- Field firing (unknown distance).
- Observation and target detection.
- Range estimation.
- Concealment and concealed movement.
- Land navigation.
- Call for fire.
- Communication procedures.
- Physical training.

Once a soldier has completed the indoctrination program, the commander should review his training records and conduct a personal interview with him. Then, the commander, when he is fully satisfied with the soldier's readiness, should certify on DA Form 4187 that he meets the prerequisites for the Sniper School.

The diligent screening of potential snipers by unit commanders will ensure that only the best soldiers are sent to the U.S. Army Sniper School; those soldiers, in turn, when they graduate, will then provide their commanders with invaluable combat multipliers.

Additional information on the course's prerequisites and program of instruction is available from Commander, 2d Battalion, 29th Infantry, ATTN: USASS, Fort Benning, GA 31905-5000; telephone DSN 784-7455/7438 or commercial (404) 544-7455/7438.

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The Neglected M16 Magazine

MAJOR THOMAS H. BAKER

In many units, soldiers are not issued magazines for their individual weapons. The magazines are usually transported from the supply room to the range in footlockers or other makeshift containers. Other units temporarily issue magazines to the soldiers, then collect them and store them at the ammunition point on the range. In either case, the intent is to have the magazines loaded by the personnel manning the ammunition point instead of by the individual soldiers, and to promote ammunition accountability and speed range operations.

Some may wonder, "What's wrong with that? After all, this is what they do in initial entry training, and it is officially encouraged by doctrine and regulations." But such practices cause a lot of problems:

First, the magazine is an important part of the rifle and should be mated with a specific weapon. Because of dimensional differences in both weapons and magazines caused by manufacturing and wear, a magazine that is fully functional in one weapon may not function at all in another. Too, our current zero and qualification practices do not permit our soldiers to fire fully loaded magazines to insure that they function properly in a particular

weapon. But magazines that work with 3, 10, or 20 rounds on the zero or qualification ranges, or with 30 blanks on a field training exercise, may not necessarily function when they are fully loaded with live ammunition. The only way to determine proper functioning is to use the magazine fully loaded with live ammunition.

Another problem that can cause magazine malfunctions is the practice of keeping them at an ammunition point instead of with the weapon in which they function well. The magazines stored at an ammunition point are often not checked for serviceability and, in the usual rush to leave a range, are frequently placed in containers and transported directly to an arms room, supply room, or weapon pool where they are stored and forgotten until needed again. As a result, they are rarely inspected and cleaned, and when issued later, they are dirty and the springs are rusted, which causes additional malfunctions.

Pooling magazines, either at the ammunition point or the arms room, does not encourage soldiers to properly maintain them. In other words, if the magazines are not individually issued, the soldiers are seldom inclined or directed to maintain them carefully. This is illustrated on numerous ranges and exercises where magazines (and other items of equipment that are not individually assigned) are tossed, kicked, dropped, or generally mishandled. The magazine is relatively fragile and will not function properly if subjected to abuse and poor maintenance; it is an important part of the weapon and should not be taken for granted. Dropping magazines on the ground permits dirt to get into them, and tossing them into footlockers or other hard containers bends or breaks the feed lips and dents the magazine bodies.

Using a detail to clean an entire unit's magazines — unless the process is closely supervised by knowledgeable, conscientious leaders — often results in improper cleaning, lubrication, or assembly. Few soldiers would trust someone else to clean and reassemble their weapons in combat; the same should apply to the care and loading of magazines.

Pooling also encourages poor training habits. Soldiers who are not assigned to an ammunition detail rarely learn how to load the magazines using the charger and stripper clips provided in the bandoliers. And, for the sake of speed or comfort, the soldiers who are assigned to the ammunition detail frequently adopt improper loading practices. (They say that loading numerous magazines according to the speed loading method prescribed in Field Manual 23-9 hurts their thumbs, and they don't like it.) A common example of improper loading is placing the ten-round stripper clip into the charger, attaching the charger to the magazine, turning the entire assembly upside down with the cartridges resting on a hard surface and forcing the magazine downward to load the cartridges. The feed lips are damaged in the process, and this usually results in feeding or ammunition retention problems.

Two other common forms of magazine mistreatment stem from watching too many movies on television. First, a soldier inserts the knotted end of a straight or looped piece of parachute cord into the bottom of the magazine before replacing the floorplate. This leaves a length of cord as a sort of handle. The intent of this ingenious and well-meaning modification is to allow the soldier to extract magazines from the pouch rapidly by yanking them out with the cord. But M16 magazines, with the exception of the spring and follower, are made of aluminum and magnesium alloys that do not withstand much pressure without cracking, deforming, or breaking. Aside from creating another entrance for dirt and dust, a soldier, in the excitement of combat, may yank too hard and wind up jerking the floorplate completely off of the magazine, releasing the spring, follower, and ammunition onto the ground.

Besides, once the magazine is withdrawn it is still dangling on a string, and the time saved extracting it must then be used to gain control of the magazine before it can be inserted into the weapon.

In another form of abuse, two magazines are attached, usually by

means of tape or commercially available spring clips. One magazine is inserted in the weapon with the other attached to it upside down so it can be reversed and loaded as soon as the first one is expended.

If everything works well, this method may be slightly faster for a magazine change, but it offers little other advantage to the soldier, the weapon, the magazine, or the ammunition. In the prone position, the bottom magazine, with its cartridges frequently touching the ground, becomes nothing more than a highly efficient mud scoop. If the feed lips of that magazine bend or break for any reason, all the ammunition in it is dumped on the ground.

Also, the extended length of the two magazines forces a soldier into an uncommonly high prone position that adversely affects his marksmanship and increases his exposure to enemy detection and fire. The increased weight of the second magazine may also cause excessive wear to the weapon's magazine catch or magazine well, resulting in magazine/cartridge alignment problems (with accompanying malfunctions), or even magazine retention problems. (It is most embarrassing, to say nothing of hazardous, to have a magazine fall out in the middle of a fire fight.)

To resolve problems such as these, the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (AMU) recommends the following:

The Army's proponent for small arms marksmanship should develop detailed doctrine that encourages proper issue, maintenance, handling, storage, inspection, loading, and testing of magazines. Issue and range procedures should be developed that prohibit the pooling of magazines. Soldiers should then be required to load their own magazines and store them in their ammunition pouches. This might be done at the last concurrent training station before they are called to the firing line. Practice, qualification, ARTEP, or other courses should be developed that enable soldiers to fire fully loaded magazines for function testing along with their marksmanship training and evaluation.

In schools for officers, NCOs, and weapon or range instructors, training on proper magazine handling should be part of the marksmanship portion of the curriculum. Soldiers learn from their leaders, and AMU observations of hundreds of NCOs, officers, and instructors indicate a general lack of knowledge concerning magazine handling and maintenance.

At the unit level, individual soldiers should be issued basic loads of magazines and held responsible for their accountability, proper maintenance, and handling. Leaders should inspect the magazines during TA-50 or weapon inspections and enforce proper maintenance, storage, and handling procedures.

Although magazine pooling is currently mandatory at many ranges or installations, certain steps can be taken to reduce the problems with this procedure. Tape marking the magazines with the soldiers' names would ensure that each is issued the same magazine at the ammunition point. And proper training and supervision of the loading detail would reduce damages. Unserviceable magazines could then be destroyed and replaced.

Current marksmanship training doctrine and practices generally stress reducing the expenditure of resources and time, especially in deployment situations. But neither resources nor time should be reduced to the point that lives and combat readiness are placed in jeopardy.

Problems with M16A2 magazines can be solved, and solving them will increase the survivability of our soldiers and improve their proficiency and confidence in their weapons. No soldier should ever be required to perform the first complete operational check of his weapon after he is engaged with the enemy.

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Fire Support in Low Intensity Conflicts

MAJOR GARNETT ARNOLD

Low intensity conflict poses a number of unique challenges for fire support planners. The nature of warfare within this spectrum exposes three key issues that continue to plague both maneuver commanders and fire support personnel — the challenges of using fire support on a non-linear battlefield, avoiding fratricide, and avoiding unnecessary collateral damage.

The Non-linear Battlefield. Field Manual 100-5, Operations (May 1986),